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AFFAIRS IN LIBERIA.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A LETTER OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE SUBMITTING A REPORT OF THE COMMISSION WHICH VISITED LIBERIA IN PURSUANCE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE DEFICIENCY ACT OF MARCH 4, 1909, "TO INVESTIGATE THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS CITIZENS IN THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE AUTHORITIES OF SAID REPUBLIC."

MARCH 25, 1910.—Read; referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

I lay before the Congress herewith a report submitted by the commission which visited Liberia in pursuance of the provisions of the deficiency act of March 4, 1909, "to investigate the interests of the United States and its citizens in the Republic of Liberia, with the consent of the authorities of said Republic."

This report is accompanied by a communication of the Secretary of State reciting the conditions under which the Liberian commonwealth was founded through the efforts of the Government of the United States and American citizens, and commenting on the recommendations of the commission touching the course to be pursued by this Government in aid of Liberia at this juncture of stress and need. I cordially concur in the views of the Secretary of State and trust that the policy of the United States toward Liberia will be so shaped as to fulfill our national duty to the Liberian people who, by the efforts of this Government and through the material enterprise of American citizens, were established on the African coast and set on the pathway to sovereign statehood.

WM. H. TAFT.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 25, 1910.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE PRESIDENT CONCERNING
AFFAIRS IN LIBERIA.

To the PRESIDENT:

For a number of years past the Republic of Liberia has been to a notable degree embarrassed in its internal government, its finances, and its relations with the powers possessing territories adjacent to it. The Republic has on several occasions sought counsel and solicited aid from the Government of the United States to make head against the difficulties which beset it.

In June, 1908, the troubles of Liberia, both internal and with the Government of Great Britain, reached so acute a phase that the Liberian Government sent a special commission to the United States to ask for assistance in maintaining the independence of the Republic and to enable it to carry on a peaceful, orderly, and efficient government.

My predecessor, on the 18th of January, 1909, made a report to the President, briefly reviewing the situation and advising that Congress be asked for an appropriation to pay the expenses of a commission of experienced and judicious American citizens to visit Liberia and there examine the situation and confer with the officers of the Liberian Government and with the representatives of other governments with a view to reporting recommendations as to the specific action on the part of the United States which would constitute the most effective measure of relief. This report was laid by the President before Congress January 19, 1909, accompanied by correspondence had with the Liberian representatives and with the British Government, indicating the desire and expectation of Great Britain for action which would emphasize and give definite shape to the deep interest which Great Britain and the United States feel in the welfare of Liberia and the perpetuity of its government.

Provision having been made in the deficiency act of March 4, 1909, "To enable the State Department to investigate the interests of the United States and its citizens in the Republic of Liberia, with the consent of the authorities of said Republic, twenty thousand dollars," the President appointed Mr. Roland P. Falkner, Mr. George Sale, and Mr. Emmett J. Scott as such commissioners. They visited Liberia and entered upon a comprehensive and thorough examination of all conditions bearing upon the purpose of their mission. The result is embodied in a report, accompanied by recommendations as to the course to be pursued by the Government of the United States with respect to Liberia. The report is herewith submitted.

Before considering the recommendations of the commission, it is proper to advert to the connection of the United States with the establishment of the Liberian Republic. The movement began in the latter part of the eighteenth century. As early as 1781 Thomas Jefferson advocated the gradual abolition of slavery by enfranchisement, deportation, and colonization. At that time there were numbers of enfranchised Africans in the United States, some liberated by the act of their masters, others freed by reason of having been captured upon slave-trade ships, and the act of 1794, which prohibited the carrying on of the slave trade from the United States to any foreign place or country, was followed in 1800 and 1803 by prohibition of the importation of slaves and again in 1807. By 1800 the

numbers of enfranchised Africans had become sufficiently notable to lead the legislature of Virginia to request the Government to correspond with the President "on the subject of purchasing land without the limits of this State whither persons obnoxious to the law or dangerous to the peace of society may be removed," and recommending Africa as an appropriate site.

Apart from this proposal for colonial deportation, prompted by motives of policy, there had been a philanthropic movement for negro colonization, and as early as 1773 Samuel Hopkins broached a scheme looking to missionary work in Africa with a nucleus of trained natives from the United States and provision for colonies. The Revolutionary war halted this project, but it was revived in 1787 coincidentally with the scheme of Wilberforce and other British philanthropists to colonize some 400 liberated African slaves at Sierra Leone. The American scheme, however, fell through for lack of funds.

The project of African colonization of American negroes took formal shape soon after the enactment of the statute of 1818, by which slave trade was made piracy. A supplementary act of March 3, 1819, provided, by section 2, that negroes from captured slavers should be safely kept, supported, and removed "beyond the limits of the United States." The President was authorized to make arrangements for such removal and to appoint a proper person or persons, residing upon the coast of Africa, as agent or agents for receiving the negroes taken from captured slavers by the armed vessels of the United States. One hundred thousand dollars was appropriated to carry out the act, and from 1826 to 1845 appropriations were made at intervals for the support of the agency or for the keep and deportation of the liberated negroes.

The passage of the acts of 1818 and 1819 is believed to have been stimulated by the American Colonization Society, which had been organized in 1816. The plan for this colonization society was started through missionary agencies and taken up by the States of Maryland and Virginia. Henry Clay strongly advocated the scheme, and John Randolph enlarged upon its advantages in removing a class of persons then deemed liable to become a burden upon the community. The colonization society elected officers January 1, 1817, and in March, 1818, sent a ship to negotiate for a site near Sierra Leone. Sherbro Island, now a part of the coast of Liberia, was selected, but its acquisition was not consummated, owing to exhaustion of the funds of the society. The scheme, however, had so far taken practical shape that when called upon to designate a proposed colony under the act of March 3, 1819, President Monroe adopted the site chosen by the colonization society and appointed two agents, the Rev. Samuel Bacon and John P. Bankson, and sent them thither.

The government agency was, however, kept wholly distinct from the colonization society's venture. The agents were instructed:

"To exercise no power founded on the principle of colonization, or other principle than that of performing benevolent offices;" and again "You are not to connect your agency with the views or plans of the colonization society, with which, under the law, the Government of the United States has no concern."

Yet, as a matter of fact, the agency and colony were practically identical; and for years (according to a report of Amos Kendall, Fourth Auditor to the Secretary of the Navy, August, 1830) the resources of the Government were employed "to colonize recaptured Africans, to build homes for them, to furnish them with

farming utensils, to pay instructors to teach them, to purchase ships for their convenience, to build forts for their protection, to supply them with arms and munitions of war, to enlist troops to guard them, and to employ the army and navy in their defense." (McPherson's History of Liberia. Johns Hopkins, publishers, 1891, p. 22.)

The Treasury Department appears to have expended for the foregoing purpose, in 1821, \$4,361.25, and appropriations for keeping up the agency were thereafter made from time to time.

To carry out the act of 1819 and transport the first installment of liberated slave-trade victims, the government agents chartered the ship *Elizabeth* and made provision for conveying and settling 300 negroes. That number not showing up, the agents "agreed to receive on board such free blacks recommended by the society as might be required for the purpose of the agency." Even with this reinforcement but 86 were shipped. The *Elizabeth* sailed February 6, 1820, convoyed to the African coast by the U. S. sloop of war *Cyane*. On reaching the coast it was found that the natives had repented themselves of the Sherbro Island option and refused to sell. The two agents and a third of the colonists soon died of fever, and the rest went to the near-by British settlement at Sierra Leone.

The next year a fresh attempt was made. The brig *Nautilus* was sent out with 28 emigrants under J. B. Winn. They selected a favorable spot near Cape Mesurado (miscalled Montserado). The natives refused to sell. Winn returned home disheartened. In November the United States Government took a hand, by sending out a new agent, Dr. Eli Ayres, and the naval armed schooner *Alligator*, commanded by Lieut. R. P. Stockton, U. S. Navy. The lieutenant energetically persuaded the natives to sell the Montserado site. The sale was effected December 15, 1821, the natives making over to the American Colonization Society, represented by Doctor Ayres and Lieutenant Stockton, a strip of coast land 130 miles long and 40 broad, with perpetual tenure, for the settlement of American freed slaves. The price paid was a miscellaneous assortment of trading goods--muskets, powder, tobacco, umbrellas, hats, soap, calico, and other things. These supplies appear to have been furnished by the colonization society, as no entry of that nature in the statement of disbursements under the 1819 appropriation of \$100,000 is found.

Preparations were at once made to found the settlement, to which, in honor of the President, the name Monrovia was given. The surviving emigrants of the previous expedition were brought from Sierra Leone and established in their new home, under Doctor Ayres's care.

From the outset the State of Maryland identified itself with the operations of the American Colonization Society. Huts were built for the colonists in 1822, and emigrants were dispatched to occupy them. The settlers naturally endured great hardship, owing to climatic conditions and the hostility of the native tribes of the interior. In November, 1822, the colonists successfully resisted, with some assistance from the Sierra Leone settlers, a formidable attack of the natives. In 1823 the American naval sloop *Cyane* again visited the coast, bringing more recruits. Other vessels with colonists followed, and in June, 1824, the U. S. sloop *Porpoise* arrived, bringing a name for the colony, Liberia, and advised as to the most effective way of organizing their interests and effectively managing the settlement.

The colonists adopted a so-called "constitution," which, however, was little more than a set of community by-laws, and entered upon a scheme of self-administration.

About 1832 a new phase of the settlement began. Various state colonization societies, which had been organized following the example of those of Maryland and Virginia, undertook to found separate settlements on the neighboring coast. The Maryland society struck out afresh for itself by establishing a new settlement at Cape Palmas to which the name of "Maryland in Liberia" was given, and to this supplementary settlement a constitution and bill of rights as well as an ordinance for the government of the colony were given by the society. Societies founded in New York and in Pennsylvania settled Bassa Cove; a Mississippi colonization society founded Greenville; a Louisiana society also started another settlement.

The interests of these independent and rival settlements naturally clashed. Energies which might have been potential if devoted to carrying out the original purposes of the colony recognized by the United States were dissipated among feeble and struggling settlements. The need of general laws and supervision became apparent if the essential American character of the settlement and its perpetuity were to be maintained. A movement toward a federation of the settlements was successful. All the settlements except Maryland in Liberia united in 1837 to form the Commonwealth of Liberia, governed by a board of directors delegated by the several parent societies in the United States. Thomas Buchanan was chosen governor of the new Commonwealth.

This Commonwealth, like the primary settlement, was merely an organized community without international status or sanction. It professed no allegiance to any known power nor was it recognized by any power as an independent state. Notwithstanding this, it asserted one of the prerogatives of sovereignty by imposing customs duties upon imported wares. This was resisted by the neighboring British colonies of Sierra Leone. The Liberian revenue schooner *John Seyes*, while enforcing the customs collections, was seized by a British vessel and carried before the admiralty court at Sierra Leone. This led to controversy with the British Government, in which the United States intervened to support the complaints of officers of the American Colonization Society relative to the difficulties which had arisen between the British traders and the Liberian Commonwealth.

In the course of the correspondence with the British Government in 1843 Mr. Webster said:

Founded principally with a view to the amelioration of the condition of an interesting portion of the great human family, this colony has conciliated more and more the good will, and has from time to time received the support of this Government. Without having passed any laws for their regulation, the American Government takes a deep interest in the welfare of the people of Liberia, and is disposed to extend to them a just degree of countenance and protection.

On September 25 Mr. Upshur said:

To the United States it (Liberia) is an object of peculiar interest. It was established by our people and has gone on under the countenance and good offices of our Government. It is identified with the success of a great object, which has enlisted the feelings, and called into action the enlarged benevolence, of a large proportion of our people. It is natural, therefore, that we should

regard it with greater sympathy and solicitude than would attach to it under other circumstances. * * *

For several years it was compelled to defend itself by arms, and unaided, against the native tribes, and succeeded in sustaining itself only at a melancholy sacrifice of comfort and a lamentable loss of human lives. No nation has ever complained that it has acquired territory in Africa; but, on the contrary, for twenty-two years it has been allowed with the full knowledge of all nations to enlarge its borders from time to time, as its safety or its necessities required. * * *

It is not perceived that any nation can have just reason to complain that this settlement does not confine itself to the limits of its original territory. * * *

This Government does not, of course, undertake to settle and adjust differences which have arisen between British subjects and the authorities of Liberia. Those authorities are responsible for their own acts, and they certainly would not expect the support or countenance of this Government in any act of injustice toward individuals or nations. But, as they are themselves nearly powerless, they must rely, for the protection of their own rights, on the justice and sympathy of other powers. Although no apprehension is entertained that the British Government mediates any wrong to this interesting settlement, yet the occasion is deemed a fit one for making known, beyond a simple answer to your inquiries, in what light it is regarded by the Government and people of the United States. It is due to Her Majesty's Government that I should inform you that this Government regards it as occupying a peculiar position and as possessing peculiar claims to the friendly consideration of all Christian powers; that this Government will be at all times prepared to interpose its good offices to prevent any encroachment by the colony upon any just right of any nation; and that it would be very unwilling to see it despoiled of its territory rightfully acquired, or improperly restrained in the exercise of its necessary rights and powers as an independent settlement.

The dispute between the Commonwealth and the British Government was not adjusted, by reason of the want of national power on the part of the colonists. The remedy for this situation was obvious.

The parent societies in the United States conveyed their rights to the council of the Commonwealth—merely reserving ownership of a part of the lands they had purchased—and advised the colonists to declare themselves independent, elect an assembly and frame a constitution.

On August 24, 1847, this change was effected with the consent of all parties, the Republic of Liberia being duly inaugurated under the adopted constitution and the elected President installed. The colony of "Maryland in Liberia" alone held aloof and continued as an independent community unrecognized by any foreign power and devoid of any character of sovereignty until April, 1857, when it was received into the Republic as Maryland County.

The entrance of Liberia into the family of nations encountered no opposition on the part of the British Government. On the contrary, the Republic of Liberia was recognized by England in a few weeks and on November 21, 1848, a treaty was signed with Great Britain. Soon afterwards Liberia negotiated other treaties with France, the Hanseatic Republics, Belgium and Denmark, thus establishing its position as a sovereign state.

The story of Liberia from its earliest inception to its elevation to independent statehood demonstrates its American character throughout. Its first foothold on the African coast was through the efforts of American citizens. From 1819, the association of the Government of the United States with the project is distinct. The colony was a necessary factor in the execution of a federal statute. The vessels of the United States participated in the initial acts of colonization. Negotiations with the inland tribes for the purchase

of lands were conducted by officers of the United States. Prior to the civil war the United States maintained a squadron on the west coast of Africa to suppress the slave trade, and the officers of this squadron lent their aid and assistance to the Liberians in their troubles with the natives. In 1886 Congress authorized the Secretary of the Navy to transfer a gunboat to Liberia, but no vessel was found available for the intended service.

Thus the resources of the United States Government have been employed to colonize the liberated Africans, to build homes for them, to furnish them with farming utensils, to pay instructors for them, to purchase or charter ships for their convenience, to detail naval vessels for the transport of its agents and as convoys to the colonists, to build forts for the protection of the settlers, to supply them with arms and munitions of war, to enlist troops to guard them, and to employ the army and navy in their defense. The lands which the several state colonies established were purchased with American money by the several state societies. The initial organization of the Commonwealth was perfected and controlled by the parent societies in the United States, and the eventual creation of the Republic of Liberia was due to the generous counsel and action of the American societies in advising the organization to become an independent state and in relinquishing to the new state the directory powers they had theretofore exercised.

Although thus recognized by important European states as a member of the confraternity of nations and admitted to the right of contracting treaties with them, the recognition of the new republic by the United States was long deferred notwithstanding repeated overtures on the part of Liberia. It is a matter of legislative history that the reason for withholding from Liberia the ultimate right of recognition was on the same grounds which long prevented entrance into full international relations with the Republic of Haiti. In the case of Liberia the motives for nonrecognition were even stronger, the colony being in part made up of deported freedmen established on the African coast by the Government of the United States—so that political and racial obstacles naturally interposed to prevent recognition so long as slavery endured in the United States. It was not until June 3, 1862, that tardy recognition was accorded to the Republic of Liberia by an act of Congress, whereby the President was authorized to appoint diplomatic representatives of the United States to the Republics of Haiti and Liberia, respectively, under credence as commissioners and consuls-general. John J. Henry, of Delaware, was so commissioned to Liberia March 11, 1863.

Prior, however, to the establishment of direct diplomatic relations with Liberia, the American minister at London, Charles Francis Adams, was authorized to negotiate with the President of Liberia, Stephen Allen Benson, who resorted to London for the purpose, a treaty of commerce and navigation. That treaty was signed October 21, 1862, and, professing, as it did, to be concluded upon the basis of the most perfect equality and reciprocity, omits all suggestion of original dependence upon the United States, or of obligations growing out of such dependence; but it is to be remarked that by Article VIII the United States Government "engages never to interfere, unless solicited by the Government of Liberia, in the affairs between the aboriginal inhabitants and the Government of

the Republic of Liberia," and, further, that should any United States citizen suffer loss, in person or property, from violence by the aboriginal inhabitants, and the Government of the Republic of Liberia should not be able to bring the aggressor to justice, the United States Government engages, upon requisition to that end by the Liberian Government, to lend such aid as may be required. No occasion has arisen for bringing this particular provision of the treaty into effect.

The Liberian Government has, however, at various times sought aid and counsel from the United States Government, especially in its boundary disputes with its neighbors.

Liberia's first trouble on this score was with Great Britain. The boundaries of the Republic, being based on vague border concessions from the native tribes, with which the Republic was often in conflict, have never been well defined. In 1849 Liberia claimed possession from Cape Mount on the northwest to San Pedro River on the southeast. By 1852 more purchases of land had been effected extending nearly to Sherbro Island. In this latter territory Sierra Leonians settled, denying Liberian jurisdiction. By 1866 a controversy was acutely raised by Great Britain. A compromise was signed by President Roye in 1871 and was rejected by the Liberian Senate. An effort to settle the boundary by arbitration with an American umpire came to nothing because of the British arbitrator's refusal to submit to the umpire the points in disagreement. At length in 1882 Great Britain *ex parte* assigned the Manna River as the boundary. Liberia remonstrated but was met by the announcement that Great Britain refused to recognize any rights of Liberia to any portions of the territory in dispute. At this stage Liberia appealed to the United States, which, in view of all the circumstances and of the difficulty of proving title under the uncertain conditions of acquisition and of the obvious incapacity of Liberia to effectively maintain administrative control in the territory claimed, counseled Liberia to acquiesce and establish a boundary which could be maintained and respected. By a convention between Liberia and Great Britain, signed November 11, 1885, the Manna River boundary was definitely fixed.

The boundary conditions to the southeastward were in a similar state of uncertainty. The original concession of the native chiefs to the Maryland Colonization Society for the territory named by that society, "Maryland in Liberia," purported to extend to the San Pedro River. In 1885 the French settlers on the French Ivory coast undertook, through some arrangement with the natives, to control territory west of the San Pedro. At the instance of the Liberian Government Mr. Bayard, then Secretary of State, addressed the Government of France. Mr. Bayard then said:

"We exercise no protectorate over Liberia, but the circumstance that the Republic originated through the colonization of American citizens, and was established under the fostering sanction of this Government, gives us the right, as the next friend of Liberia, to aid her in preventing any encroachment of foreign powers.

No very satisfactory result having attended this action, Mr. Bayard again, in 1887, reverted to the French aggressions on the territory of Liberia between the Cavally and San Pedro rivers and recited very fully the various deeds of cession by which the lands as far south as the San Pedro River were purchased from the natives by the Mary-

land State Colonization Society at various dates between 1834 and 1846. The controversy dragged along until 1892, when in January the French ambassador, in justification of the claim of France to the territories in dispute, submitted treaties with native tribes dated in 1890 and 1891.

In Mr. Blaine's dispatch to Minister Coolidge, June 4, 1892, the interest of the United States in the fortunes of Liberia and our jealous concern that full respect should be paid to the independent and sovereign people of that Republic in the family of nations, was emphatically shown.

It is worthy of note that at the time of the African slave-trade conference of Brussels in June, 1890, the United States made an explicit declaration of the relation of the Republic of Liberia to the United States, and demanded that Liberia should be invited, as a sovereign power, to adhere to the treaty. This demand was warmly supported in the conference, and promptly acquiesced in. Baron Lambergmont, president of the conference, eloquently stated the circumstances which led not only the United States but all those interested in African progress, to attach great importance to the cooperation of Liberia for the realization of the objects of the conference. Baron Lambergmont said:

All the world knows the history of the Republic of Liberia. Founded with the object of affording a home to certain freed American slaves desiring to return to the mother country, it was destined at the same time to fulfill a civilizing mission upon the Guinea coast. This creation has produced happy results. It began, it is true, under great difficulties, but this often happens in the early life of new States. This young Republic none the less deserves the sympathies of all those who are interested in the cause of humanity in Africa. It is an independent and free State. Moreover, the conference has every reason in associating it with its work, not only because of the mission Liberia is called upon to fulfill, but also because it is also in a position to lend indispensable assistance toward the execution of several of the clauses of the general act.

The British delegate welcomed Baron Lambergmont's declaration, adding that the place of Liberia had been fixed among the independent States which had been invited to adhere to the general act.

Mr. Blaine made a strong point of Liberia's claim to unquestioning respect for its own vested rights through the acquisition of title to the disputed territory long prior to the adverse title claimed by France. Before the discussion of this aspect of the question with the French Government was fairly under way, Baron von Stein, minister resident of the Liberian Republic in Belgium, who was appointed as the commissioner to negotiate with France, hastily concluded a treaty by which a large part of Maryland County was relinquished. The treaty was signed December 8, 1892. It provided that the boundary was to follow the middle of the Cavally River for 20 miles from its mouth and run thereafter by rivers and along meridians in such manner as to give to France the entire basin of the Niger and its affluents.

This description, however, was vague. The rivers mentioned have not been identified and the effect of the settlement—for which it is to be noted the Liberian Government received the munificent sum of 25,000 francs for indemnity—was to leave the whole Franco-Liberian boundary in a state of absolute uncertainty. Hence the more recent dispute with France which was settled in 1907 by Liberia's accept-

ance, for peace' sake, of a definite and charted inland boundary which gave to France nearly all that was in dispute.

It is from this condition of the interior boundaries of Liberia that her present troubles and embarrassments are largely due. The hinterland of Liberia is practically an unknown region. It is unsettled except for the native tribes, mostly evil disposed toward Liberia, and by occasional French or British stragglers. Administrative and police protection in those regions is practically beyond the power of the Government at Monrovia, while, on the other hand, Great Britain and France are alike insistent upon holding Liberia responsible for the safety of their nationals.

In view of these conditions Great Britain constrained Liberia to conclude an arrangement by which the frontier police of Liberia should be officered by British subjects; on the other hand, France claims the right to establish posts for the protection of the French settlers in Liberian territory when the local power is insufficient.

Of course a boundary of indefinite character thus overpassed becomes no boundary, and the claim of the other party elastically moves inward to keep pace with its stragglers.

The report of the Liberian Commission, herewith submitted, goes very fully into the present questions with Great Britain.

Naturally the importance of this phase of the Liberian situation has led the commissioners to give it the leading place in their report, and to base upon it the first of their recommendations, namely, that the United States extend its aid to Liberia in the prompt settlement of pending boundary disputes. It is the conclusion of the commission that Liberia alone is helpless to obtain a definitive fixation of her boundaries, and that while in the past her negotiations have not been unskillful, she has at every turn been forced to yield to each new aggression. The commission believe that a form of action can be found which is consonant with diplomatic usage and which will enable the United States to appear as attorney or next friend of Liberia and bring to the negotiations of Liberia the ability and prestige of the United States.

This is a position which the United States has long assumed, and, as Mr. Bayard said, the circumstance of the origin of the Liberian Republic gives the United States the right as the "next friend of Liberia to aid her in preventing any enchoachment of foreign powers upon her territorial sovereignty and in settling any dispute that may arise."

It is, however, to be remarked that in the past the assumption by the United States of the position of next friend has been unavailing, and the remonstrances of this Government have generally been met by an intimation that the dispute has been settled directly with Liberia. Something more is needed if the United States is to discharge any adequate function of advocacy and counsel for Liberia—such, for instance, as a treaty engagement whereby Liberia delegates and the United States assumes the function of attorney in fact for Liberia in matters of international controversy. There are many precedents for the delegation by a sovereign State of its international representation to the diplomatic machinery of another State.

The report of the commission deals extensively with the question of the financial situation of Liberia. The debt, both domestic and foreign, is analyzed. It has been for the most part incurred under

disadvantageous circumstances, and yet, considering the limited resources and impoverished condition of the national exchequer of Liberia, the total sum, internal and external, is comparatively small—less than one and a half million dollars in all. The recommendation of the commission looks to the establishment of some system of collection and control of the revenues of the country for the benefit alike of the Government and the creditors, modeled in some respect upon the plan which has been of such practical success in Santo Domingo, and that as a part of this plan the existing debt be refunded.

The further recommendation is made that the agencies intrusted with this financial control should also take part in the reform of the internal finances of the Republic.

Both of these suggestions are eminently practical.

The fourth recommendation is that the United States lend its aid to Liberia in organizing and drilling an adequate constabulary or frontier police force.

The importance of this recommendation can hardly be overestimated. It is a vital concomitant of any effective settlement of the boundary questions with Liberia's powerful neighbors to the north and east. As already said, the vague and uncertain character of the boundary, in itself a sufficiently grave evil, is made worse by the virtual inability of Liberia to police any boundary whatever. It is significant that the settlement with Great Britain was founded in great part on the obligation of Liberia to maintain a frontier police under British officers. The engagement with France was less specific, but here again it is significant that France claims the right to overstep her boundaries, such as they are, and supply the lack of Liberian police. The process in the case of an indefinite boundary is synonymous with the foundation of a claim for more territory. Without the creation of adequate police force in the interior the establishment of a hard and fast boundary line through the unsettled wilds would be a misfortune rather than an advantage for Liberia, for it would entail upon the Republic responsibilities of protection on the hither side of the line which might not be so effectively urged if the real frontier and the real jurisdiction of the locality were uncertain.

The fifth recommendation of the commission is that the United States establish and maintain a research station in Liberia to aid in the development of the agricultural and natural wealth of the country, and to inaugurate the improvements in the line of hygiene and sanitation, so necessary in a tropical and insalubrious climate, and which the experience gained in Cuba, Panama, and the Philippines especially qualifies the United States to devise and execute.

The sixth and last recommendation is that the United States establish a naval coaling station in Liberia.

The advantage and, indeed, the necessity of doing this, if the United States is to undertake the friendly offices outlined in the other recommendations, is obvious.

The report of the commission and its recommendations have received most attentive study on the part of the Department of State and the conclusion is reached that action in the suggested lines is not only expedient but in the nature of a duty to a community which owes its existence to the United States and is the nation's ward.

It is the purpose of the department, if the President approve and so direct, to lay before the Liberian Government a project of a treaty designed to accomplish these objects.

The United States minister, Mr. Ernest Lyon, is now on his way to Monrovia on the cruiser *Birmingham*, and he is directed to sound the Liberian Government as to the general provisions of a treaty adequate to accomplish the ends in view.

With these explanatory observations, the report of the Liberian Commission is transmitted to the President with the recommendation that it be laid before the Congress and urgent attention invited thereto.

Respectfully submitted.

P. C. KNOX.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, March 22, 1910.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 6, 1909.*

SIR: The commission of the United States appointed "to investigate the interests of the United States and its citizens in the Republic of Liberia" in pursuance of the act of March 4, 1909, has the honor to present herewith its report.

In accordance with the arrangements made by your department, the commission sailed for Liberia on April 24, 1909, arriving in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, on May 8, and spending thirty days in Liberia and Sierra Leone, in exact compliance with the programme of the department. While the general purpose of the commission was described generally in the appropriation act as above quoted, its specific duties were more particularly set forth in your letter of instructions. Owing to the limited time at the disposal of the commission, it was necessary to confine its inquiries almost exclusively to the matters specifically mentioned in these instructions.

By a division of the work among the several commissioners, the special matters called to its attention were investigated as thoroughly as time would permit. It has been our effort to confine the report to a concise statement of the conclusions and recommendations of the commission.

In presenting its conclusions, the commission finds itself under the necessity of reviewing the acts and to some extent the policies of other governments and of alluding to certain facts and circumstances which may seem to place in unfavorable light the course of action of friendly powers. This is not done with any desire to pass judgment upon those acts, but only that the facts may speak for themselves. To the best of its ability, the commission has endeavored to maintain an impartial attitude. The commission is also fully aware that if its recommendations be carried out, their effect will be to substitute the United States for Great Britain as the friendly counselor and adviser of Liberia. This arises from no desire to displace Great Britain, but it is a frank recognition that under present circumstances, as will appear more specifically hereafter, Great Britain

can not effectively maintain this rôle. That power has so frequently expressed its desire that Liberia may grow strong and prosperous, has so often offered its friendly aid to that end, that she must be assumed to be more interested in the end to be attained than in the means of accomplishing it, and that she could hardly interpose an objection if others propose to do what in the present juncture of affairs she can not do herself.

The duty of the commission was to investigate the actual conditions in Liberia and the causes of its present difficulties, with a view of determining whether the Liberians could extricate themselves from them, either by their own efforts or with a reasonable amount of friendly assistance by the United States.

THE LIBERIAN PEOPLE.

The commission was impressed with the dignity and intelligence of the representatives of the Government with whom it had dealings. Though these were relatively few in number, they represented the best of Liberia's citizenship, and the fact that the best men find their way into public employment is itself a favorable circumstance.

The Liberians are not a revolutionary people. Since the beginning of their national life they have maintained the forms of orderly government. In sixty-two years they have had thirteen Presidents, most of whom have been reelected for one or more terms of two years each, and when changes of administration have been sought they have been sought by constitutional means. While under stress of public opinion, one or more Presidents have resigned their office, impeachment has been resorted to but once, and revolution not at all.

Despite frequent assertions to the contrary, Liberia is not bankrupt. Much that is crude was discovered in the administration of the fiscal affairs of the Republic. The Government is embarrassed by its indebtedness and the burdens which it entails. But the national debt of less than \$1,300,000 is not excessive, even if we compared it with the present revenues. In contrast to the natural wealth of the country, it is very small. The improvement in revenues which followed the introduction of a systematic collection of customs under the administration of British officials encourages the belief that with the further development of the country and introduction of better business methods in its financial administration the burden of the debt may be considerably lightened and national credit strengthened.

Liberia is not a failure in self-government. It is true that the effective government of the country extends only to the coast towns and settlements along the rivers St. Paul and St. John, but in these towns and settlements law and order prevail, life and property are adequately protected, and crime is promptly punished. Peace, good will, and friendly feeling prevail between these towns and settlements and the native villages immediately adjacent to them.

However crude in many respects the civilization of Liberia may be, the Liberians have advanced, not retrograded, in their civilization. In estimating the progress of the Liberian people it is well to bear in mind their origin. The original elements of the population of Liberia were three: Free negroes sent out by the colonization society; Africans rescued from slave traders by the United States war vessels during the period of the suppression of the slave trade;

freedmen who emigrated to Liberia since the war. Out of these materials, guided by the traditions of life in America, the Liberian people have developed a civilization that compares not unfavorably with the better element of the negroes in the United States. It was the conviction of the commission and their associates that the Liberians had influenced the native population by which they were surrounded far more than the natives had influenced them. In the presence of that great mass of uncivilized people they have maintained a relatively high degree of civilization, of which the well-ordered home, the maintenance of law and order, the quiet Sunday rest, and the well-attended houses of worship are conspicuous signs.

It is the larger and more difficult tasks of government which now confront Liberia, chiefly as a result of the partition of Africa by European powers during recent years, which Liberia finds too hard for her. They grow out of the increasing importance of her relations with neighboring countries and the urgent necessity of more effective control and government of the native tribes within her boundaries. It is with reference to these tasks and problems growing out of them that Liberia feels the need of help from a strong power.

Specifically these problems are:

1. The maintenance of the integrity of her frontiers in the face of attempted aggressions of her neighbors against whose might she can oppose only the justice of her claims.

2. The effective control of the native tribes, especially along the frontiers, so as to leave no excuse for the occupation of her territory by her neighbors.

3. The systemization of the national finances so as to render certain the meeting of all foreign obligations and to establish the national credit on a firm basis.

4. The development of the hinterland in such a way as to increase the volume of trade and thus supply the resources necessary for the increasing wants of a progressive government and at the same time enable the government to offer inducements to desirable emigration from the United States.

Because Liberia has thus far failed in solving these problems satisfactorily she has found herself involved in controversies with foreign nations. These have created an unrest which hampers her internal development and have made her feel that her national existence is threatened by powerful neighbors without and by weakness within.

BOUNDARIES WITH FRANCE.

To the north and east Liberia has France as her neighbor. In pursuit of their policy of building up a great West African Empire the French have been a thorn in the side of Liberia. They have been consistent and persistent in their efforts to increase their boundaries. By successive treaties with Liberia they have deprived that country of territories long claimed by her. France has based its aggressions on the plea that the territory which she had annexed, and then had ceded to her by treaty, was not effectively occupied by the Liberians and was therefore subject to acquisition by another power. This in particular was the justification urged in the long dispute which culminated in the treaty of 1892, whereby Liberia lost to France a strip of 60 miles of coast and extensive territories in the interior.

The vagueness of this treaty with respect to the interior boundaries furnished the basis of claims which enabled France to make further encroachments upon territory previously assigned to Liberia and by a further treaty of 1907 to force Liberia to yet further cessions of territory estimated at 2,000 square miles, not indeed then occupied by Liberia any more than by France, but forming a valuable asset for the future development of the Republic. This treaty reflected in its terms the general uncertainty which prevails as to African geography, and required the settlement by a mixed commission of a definite boundary line in accordance with the general principles laid down in the treaty itself. By the work of this commission, so far as it has been made public, it would appear that France is preparing new aggressions upon Liberian territory. Much as the Liberians may lament the losses which were forced upon them by the treaties of 1892 and 1907, they have formally consented to them and the controversies are closed. The findings of the delimitation commission have not as yet been made public and this question is therefore pending.

Uncertainty as to the exact boundaries is not the only source of irritation which the treaty of 1907 embodies. That treaty provides that to exercise an effective police force along the frontier the Liberian Government shall assume the obligation of establishing a certain number of posts, but if the Liberian Government fails to do so the French shall be permitted to garrison these posts in Liberian territory. It may be that specific provisions for the maintenance of order were necessary, but the form chosen looks like a deliberate attempt to provide a pretext for future occupation of the territory assigned by the treaty and delimitation to Liberia. Though the occupation contemplated by the treaty is temporary, the lessons of history, and particularly those of Liberian history, show that when a foreign power has a footing within one's boundaries it is rather difficult to dislodge it.

BOUNDARIES WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

On the west Liberia adjoins the British colony of Sierra Leone. Even while Liberia was still a colony under the governors appointed by the colonization society she had trouble with Sierra Leone. British traders contended that Liberia had no right to impose customs duties, and refused to recognize her authority in this regard. The question thus raised was one of the main considerations which led to the formation of the republic.

Since Liberia has been an independent nation it has at several junctures been forced to make concessions to the ambitious designs of her neighbor. It is enough to recall the long dispute respecting the west boundary of Liberia, which was finally settled by the treaty of 1885, negotiated in its final stage at the cannon's mouth, whereby Liberia lost to Sierra Leone a considerable coast line to which she had an equitable claim.

More recently events have occurred in the northwest corner of Liberia in the native town and district of Kanre Lahun which have brought Liberia into an irritating controversy with Great Britain. The history of the case is somewhat involved. Briefly, the town was in the occupation of British command when the delimitation commission of 1903 discovered that it was located within Liberian ter-

ritory. Before it was known that this region was Liberian, the British had entered into a treaty of protection with the native chief of that district. In 1904 a native war broke out in this district, and it was alleged that raids were made into British territory. Through the consul-general of Great Britain in Monrovia, permission was granted British authorities to enter Liberian territory for the purpose of quelling this disturbance. Though the evidence shows that the hostile chief was driven out of his country some six or eight months later, the British have made no motion to retire from this Liberian territory. They have not denied Liberian sovereignty, but have recently declined to allow the Liberians to exercise it. Though they permitted Liberia to send a customs official and district commissioner into this region in 1906, in September, 1908, they refused to permit the Liberian official to discharge the duties of a district commissioner, and a month later ordered that the customs establishment be removed. Their plea is that the exercise of civil authority by Liberian officials is incompatible with the military occupation, a position which is undoubtedly well taken but which does not demonstrate either the necessity for or the justification of the said occupation. To suggestions that the British relinquish this territory to its rightful owners, evasive answers have been given, though they have sometimes been met by the suggestion that the British forces can not retire until Liberia pays the entire cost to Sierra Leone of the occupation of this territory in recent years.

The questions at issue thus stated seem to be amazingly simple. It should, however, be remarked that one of the difficulties which has prevented Liberia from securing a settlement of the question has been the unwillingness of Great Britain to take it up independently of the British programme of internal reforms, the Manna River and other claims. Inasmuch as Liberia has felt it is under some obligations to Great Britain in these other matters, it has not been in a position to press vigorously for a solution of this boundary question.

The British foreign office has protested that Great Britain has no designs on Liberian territory. We find it hard to reconcile this protestation with the acts and attitude of her officials in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Certainly there is no difficulty in understanding Great Britain's declaration that if France is permitted to make successful advances into Liberian territory she will be compelled in her own interests to claim her share.

It makes little difference whether Great Britain is the upper or the nether millstone. Liberia is between the two, and it is the conviction of the commission that unless she has the support of some power commensurate in strength with Great Britain or France, she will as an independent power speedily disappear from the map.

FRONTIER POLICE.

The problem of government in Africa is to a large extent bound up with the control of the native tribes. These must be held in subjection in order that the peaceful development of the colony be not disturbed. Warfare between the various petty tribes must be suppressed in order that the savage may become wonted to the ways of peace.

International boundaries must be respected and the maintenance of peace and order on the frontier is of the highest importance to avoid international conflicts. While these natives are for all practical purposes a subject race, they are, in international law, citizens of the country which they inhabit, and if they carry their tribal wars across international boundaries we have in effect the spectacle of citizens of Liberia in arms against the citizens of a neighboring country. It is highly necessary, therefore, to avoid such complications between the citizens of sister states.

In the various west African territories these purposes are accomplished largely through organizations known as frontier police. These organizations are composed of natives under European officers. The force is military in character, and performs duties similar to those intrusted, for instance, to the Philippine Constabulary, with which they have certain obvious analogies.

It is not alone the treaty obligations of 1907 which impose upon Liberia the maintenance of such an organization. Her own needs are the same as those of other West African commonwealths in which such a force has proved to be indispensable to the proper maintenance not only of peace, but of government authority over the native tribes. It would be unwise for Liberia to undertake these tasks, which the situation imposes, by untried methods, and it is natural that in planning such a force she should follow models set by her neighbors. From this point of view a strict military organization is an essential requisite of such a force, but Liberia and its citizens lack the experience in military affairs which would fit them properly to organize the force on such a basis. None recognize this more fully than the Liberians themselves. They are fully aware that if this force has to be an effective military unit, it must be organized, drilled, and commanded, at least for the time being, by men trained in the armies of modern states.

In view of the obligations assumed by the treaty of 1907, and in view moreover of certain urgent representations from the British foreign office, the Liberians undertook in the year 1908 to organize a frontier police force and called in the aid of British officers. The officer chosen to command the force, Capt. R. Mackay Cadell, an English militia officer, had seen service in South Africa. He was selected for this purpose largely through the instrumentality of Capt. Braithwaite Wallis, His Majesty's consul-general in Monrovia. Cadell was given the rank of major in the Liberian army and was given free hand to organize and equip the force subject only to a relatively slight supervision by the President of Liberia. He was assisted by two other British officers of the rank of captain. Headquarters for the force were selected about 2 miles from Monrovia, ground was cleared, and adequate space for the exercise of troops secured. Permanent headquarters for the officers, stores, etc., were erected, and a number of native huts for the accommodation of the troops were put up. In the late summer of 1908 enlistment and military training began. Considerable work was done in this direction, and when Major Cadell finally retired from the command of the force it was a very presentable body of men, showing the beneficial effects of a strict military training.

But if Major Cadell got on very well with his troops he got on very badly with the Liberian people and the Liberian Government. He was a man of indomitable energy, but guileless of tact. His actions on various occasions affronted the Liberian officials. Through indifference to the law or by design he enlisted a considerable number of British subjects among the troops, about one-fourth of his men being natives of Sierra Leone. When called to account for it he at first denied and afterwards admitted that some of the men might have been born in Sierra Leone, but that he supposed them to be residents of Liberia and therefore Liberians. Being called upon to dismiss the British subjects he neglected to do so. About the beginning of the present year he began to complain that his men were not paid and sought further supplies from the Government, though he was very dilatory in presenting accounts for the moneys already intrusted to him. The dissatisfaction with Major Cadell's conduct in matters at the camp led to the passage of a law by the Liberian legislature in January, 1909, reorganizing the force and dismissing its commander. The President, who had upheld Major Cadell, offered him an opportunity to resign, but on one pretext or another he delayed doing so, and when he sent in his resignation the Government could not accept it until his accounts had been adjusted. He remained in the meantime in charge of the command, and on February 11, 1909, wrote a threatening letter to the President, in which he stated that if the demands of the troops for payment of money due them were not met with within twenty-four hours, he could not be responsible for the maintenance of peace or for the safety of the President. This remarkable letter naturally created much excitement in Monrovia, but the situation was handled with extreme adroitness by the Liberian Government, which demanded that Major Cadell withdraw the British subjects composing his force and that he turn over the camp to the Liberian authorities, who would deal with the Liberian subjects. This order Cadell reluctantly obeyed on the recommendation of the British consul-general, and it was then discovered that 71 of the enlisted men were British subjects. Two or three weeks afterwards, after settling up his accounts, whereby it was revealed that he had involved the Government in a considerable unauthorized debt, he sailed for England and was soon followed by his brother officers.

It is in its effects upon the Liberian people that the really serious aspect of this affair is to be found.

There is a widespread belief among them that this was part of a plot on the part of British subjects in Liberia to make it appear that the Government was tottering to its fall and bring about the British occupation of Monrovia. There is in consequence a deep distrust of Great Britain and an intense anti-British feeling finding more or less guarded expression among all classes of people. The culminating events which gave rise to the intense feeling against anything British, as seen through Liberian eyes, appear to have been as follows:

On February 4 the British in Monrovia cabled to the foreign office that the lives of foreign residents in Monrovia were in danger and urged that a gunboat be sent for their protection. (The commission was informed by the representative of a foreign government who was present in Monrovia throughout all these troubles that the lives of foreigners "were never for one moment in danger.") On

February 10 the British gunboat *Mutin* appeared and anchored off Monrovia. It was afterwards learned that a British regiment in Sierra Leone was under orders to proceed to Monrovia. On February 11 and 12 Cadell precipitated the rupture with the Government. But for the prompt and judicious action of the Liberian Executive, aided by the American minister resident, the following would presently have been the situation: A British gunboat in the harbor, a British officer in command of the frontier force and a large number of British subjects among the enlisted men, a British official in charge of the Liberian customs, a British officer in command of the Liberian gunboat *Lark*, a British regiment in the streets of Monrovia.

It is most unfortunate that the commission has been unable to secure an account of these events from the principal British actors in them. When we reached Monrovia Major Cadell had left Liberia. The British consul-general was away on leave of absence. We were the more disappointed in not meeting the latter, as before our departure we had been shown in the State Department at Washington a dispatch from the ambassador in London stating that the British foreign office had instructed its representative in Monrovia to give the American commission the fullest information about Liberian affairs. The acting consul-general had no personal knowledge of the facts, and covered his obvious embarrassment when asked to explain some of them by the plea that he had no inside information. Later the governor of Sierra Leone, while giving very full particulars in respect to the Kanre-Lahun matter, expressly disclaimed any knowledge of Liberian affairs. The commission was therefore confined for its information to official correspondence and the statements of Liberians and foreign residents of Monrovia.

It is unnecessary to insist, in view of the foregoing facts, that the employment of British officers is now out of the question. There is, in addition, an inherent difficulty in the employment of British officers in the Liberian frontier force. Even if Major Cadell had acted with entire judgment and good faith, it is doubtful if the arrangement could have succeeded. France, through her representative in Monrovia, entered energetic protest against the exclusive employment of British officers in this force and demanded that French officers be employed in equal number. Her representative characterized Cadell's force as a "British army of occupation." Moreover, in disputes as to British rights on the frontier, the impartiality of British officers would be under severe strain and always open to suspicion.

There is even greater objection to the employment of French officers in this force. France has not evinced toward Liberia any of the friendly feeling shown by Great Britain. Moreover, not only the obligations of the treaty but the more extensive boundary line with France impose upon this force as its main duty the control of the French frontier. It would be unreasonable to expect disinterested service from French officers if their duties to Liberia should conflict, as they would be likely to do, with the interests of their own country.

The opinions of our military associates were to the effect that the force at present existing shows a commendable degree of order, discipline, and soldierly qualities, but that it was in danger of rapidly disintegrating unless put under the command of competent military officers. From a political point of view, it is equally obvious that

such officers should be citizens of a nation which has no territorial interests likely to conflict with those of Liberia.

FOREIGN LOANS.

Twice in her history Liberia has contracted loans in England. In both cases she has received a most inadequate return for the obligations which were assumed. For a long time there was a practical refusal on the part of Liberia to recognize the validity of the loan of 1871, but after a long series of negotiations a compromise was effected in 1898 with the council of foreign bondholders. This agreement has been faithfully fulfilled. When, in 1906, Liberia contracted a further loan in Great Britain, she agreed to place the control of the customs in the hands of British officials as security for the loan. This control, which was duly established in accordance with the agreement, has been highly effective and has given rise to but little irritation. It has been distasteful to the Liberians only to the extent to which it has been used in certain quarters to bolster up an interference on Great Britain's part in affairs purely internal. It may be mentioned that the loan agreement and the act of the legislature ratifying it gives to the chief inspector of customs the additional title of financial adviser, though it describes his duties as being exclusively in connection with the collection of customs and with the organization of that feature of the Government finances. The attempt on the part of the British consul-general to make it appear that wider functions were designed for this officer is, so far as the commission is aware, the only cause of any dissatisfaction with his control of customs matters.

The control of customs which has thus been established guarantees only a portion of the foreign debt, namely, that of 1906; it has no relation to the loan of 1871. It would be to the interest of the investor to place both of these loans on the same basis. An arrangement which might be contemplated for the adjustment of the debt should make such provision.

Though Liberia has little to show for the debts incurred, she has, since 1898, faithfully met the obligations rising from them. Interest and sinking-fund charges have up to date been duly paid. There have at times been some complaints of delay, but this delay has not been serious. Yet the fact that there are occasional delays, and the fact that these loans were negotiated in Great Britain, has given to the representatives of that power in Monrovia the feeling that the Liberians were under special obligations to Great Britain. The Liberians themselves have felt that such an obligation existed and that they were not in a position to insist too vigorously upon what they deemed to be their just rights in other matters of controversy.

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION.

In the internal administration of the Republic the sorest point is the finances. It is true that the income from customs is now systematically collected, and that some increase of revenue from this source has resulted from a well-ordered management. From a merely business point of view the employment of foreign officials to organize and administer this branch of the government service has been a

profitable investment. Increased costs have, of course, followed a more systematic organization, but there can be little doubt that this has been considerably more than offset by the increase of revenues, ensuing from a more efficient collection of the customs.

The revenue from internal sources is pitifully small. Crude and casual methods of collection prevail, and it seems more than probable that an intelligent organization of this service would be fruitful in more abundant revenue. The present administration has undertaken, with considerable success, the task of giving to the native tribes more and better government, asserting more freely than has been done heretofore in the interior the Liberian sovereignty. This great—and, if properly carried out, expensive—task has thus far been made a charge upon the general revenues, without any attempt to make the natives contribute to its cost. In the other countries of West Africa this service is largely maintained from the product of taxes levied in the regions governed. Eventually Liberia must evolve such sources of revenue if it is to perform adequately its duty to the native tribes. One condition of securing such revenue will be the ability to convince the natives that substantial benefits come to them from government control.

The aggregate revenues of the country are barely sufficient for its urgent governmental needs with the strictest economy in public expenditure. There is a steady pull on the government treasury, and no elasticity. There is neither a reserve balance in the treasury nor are there any sources of income capable of expansion to meet government emergencies. An empty treasury is so frequent as to be almost the rule. This situation makes it difficult to meet extraordinary expenditure. Not infrequently such expenditure has grown out of international relations, claims of foreign powers, the expenses of boundary commissions, and the like, and where they occur there have been inevitable delays in payment, which have made more acute the problems of foreign intercourse.

The urgent need for current expenditure, lack of skill in estimating receipts, and indifference as to the outcome have brought it about that for many years the appropriations and expenditure as well, so far as it has been possible to contract debt, have exceeded the revenue.

The lack of equilibrium in the budget has been aggravated by the crudest sort of treasury management. There is no adequate check upon public expenditure. Appropriations have frequently been exceeded and other unauthorized expenditure has been made. Devices for guaranteeing that the public expenditure is properly made are lacking. There is no check on fraud or dishonesty in the purchase of supplies for government use.

The result of all this has been to involve the country in a considerable floating debt. In former days its checks and drafts upon sub-treasuries were issued freely for government service irrespective of the amounts available to pay such instruments. Unpaid checks and drafts accumulated in the hands of merchants who paid them to the Government in lieu of currency for customs duties, thereby reducing actual receipts considerably below nominal amounts. Salaries of officials, a large item in the annual expenditures, are due quarterly and were formerly paid by check for the full amount without any consideration as to whether the recipient could get his check cashed. At the present time in making salary payments the state of the

treasury is taken into consideration and checks are only issued which can be paid, each claimant receiving a portion of the amount due him. A semblance of equity is thus maintained, but for the later payment of the balances due there seems to be no similar provision. The secretary of the treasury pays such balances and other obligations of the Government when he can. The fact renders him a personage of extreme importance. He can hasten or delay the payment of a government creditor, and thus reward friends and punish enemies.

In addition to her foreign loans Liberia has a domestic debt equivalent to about one year's revenue of the Republic. Much of it has been long outstanding, though some is of recent origin. It is represented by claims of various kinds documented by the most diverse evidence. The task of bringing order into this confusion is no inconsiderable one. It must, however, be undertaken if the finances of the country are to be placed upon a solid foundation.

The existence of this floating debt, the delays in making payments, and the lack of confidence of the people in the government finances impair the national credit. It makes foreign bondholders suspicious of the value of their securities. It disposes them to look to their own governments for a protection of their interests in Liberia. On the other hand, it discourages the investment of foreign capital in Liberian enterprises. The invitations which the Government had from time to time extended to foreigners to invest in transportation enterprises, banks, and the like, have fallen upon unheeding ears. Lacking the capital to develop its own resources, Liberia must look to foreign investments, and experience has amply shown that foreign capital is very coy about entering a country whose national finances are in a disorganized condition. Not only to remove any pretext for the interference of foreign powers to secure the fulfillment of international money obligations, but also to furnish a basis for the further development of the country, Liberia should heed the counsel of her friends to put her house in order.^a

The postal service of the Republic is limited in its area, irregular in its service, and primitive in its methods. It is established only between the several coast towns and with foreign countries. Its receipts and expenditures are inadequately checked and they are kept separate from those of the treasury department receipts, being used to meet expenditures, and the treasury being called upon to furnish funds to meet the deficit. Though its methods are crude, they are not expensive, and in the present condition of the Liberian revenues the commission finds it impracticable to recommend any measures of assistance on the part of the United States.

^a The public debt of Liberia is as follows:

Foreign:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Loan of 1871, 4½ per cent. principal and unpaid interest_____ | \$443, 025. 60 |
| Loan of 1906, 5 per cent. principal_____ | 464, 640. 00 |

Domestic:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Funded at 3 per cent. principal and unpaid interest_____ | 113, 206. 95 |
| Funded at 6 per cent. principal and unpaid interest_____ | 30, 000. 00 |
| Unfunded, noninterest bearing_____ | 238, 698. 05 |

1, 289, 570. 60

The judiciary of Liberia is composed of well-meaning men of general good character, but without special training in the law. In the supreme court two of the three justices are lawyers, but among the judges of the inferior courts the legal profession is not represented. The courts endeavor as well as may be to administer the principles of the common law and the statutes of Liberia. Dissatisfaction with the courts is general and has received forcible mention in the messages of the President to the legislature. According to all the evidence which the commission could obtain, this dissatisfaction has its origin in the incompetency rather than the corruption of the judges. Plans are under consideration by the administration which would, it is believed, strengthen the judiciary system, but as they involve a reduction in the number of judges they have not yet secured popular approval. The dissatisfaction of unsuccessful litigants had led a number of British subjects to lodge complaints against the courts with the British consul-general. Apparently, without thorough investigation on the part of that official, these complaints have been forwarded to London, and the impression has been created in British official circles that the courts of Liberia do not afford substantial protection of foreigners in the pursuit of their legitimate business. The commission was at great pains to examine this matter as thoroughly as possible, and it reached the conclusion that the complaints were groundless; that while foreign subjects might suffer as did the Liberians from the ignorance of judges, there was no evidence of an animus against foreigners which found expression in treatment different from that accorded to citizens. The commission was unable to discover any way in which the United States could be of aid to Liberia in this department.

Liberia has recognized education as a public concern and has its system of public schools. The system embraces Liberia College, in Monrovia, for higher education, four feeders or intermediate schools between the college and the lower schools, and the common schools. The college lacks the barest necessities in the way of equipment, and its courses of study scarcely equal those of a high school. The intermediate and common schools suffer for want of schoolhouses and efficient teachers. Annual appropriations for the support of schools are very small and are paid with much uncertainty. Certainly a radical reconstruction of its schools is one of Liberia's greatest needs. An effective system of public education can not be maintained without considerable expenditure of public money. In Liberia the necessities have been so urgent and its resources so small that it has not been able to make adequate provisions because of the poverty of the resources at their command. So long as the appropriations continue what they are there can be little hope of the development of a proper system of public education. And so long as the revenues of the country are not materially augmented there is little prospect that the Republic will be able to make larger appropriations for this service. The best educational effort in the country is at the present time under church auspices, and some of the schools maintained by religious organizations are commendable. The judgment of the commission is that the necessary reorganization and enlargement of the school system must wait upon larger revenues, and has no specific measure of assistance to recommend.

THE REFORM PROGRAMME.

Most of the problems heretofore discussed are inherent in the situation, though some of them have become more acute through the irritation engendered by unsuccessful attempts at their solution. That Liberia, if it desires to maintain its place as an independent nation, must address itself to the solution of these problems is obvious. This point of view was impressed on President Barclay by the British foreign office on the occasion of his visit to London in September, 1907. The programme which was then laid out involved four things: (1) The strengthening of the customs administration by the appointment of three additional British officials; (2) the establishment of an adequate frontier police force under European officials; (3) the reform of the treasury; and (4) the reform of the judiciary. The merit of these suggestions is incontestable, and the programme thus outlined must be regarded as eminently proper advice from a friendly nation. After Mr. Barclay returned to Liberia, and shortly after the opening of the legislature of 1907-8, these suggestions were presented to Liberia in a letter from His Majesty's consul-general in Monrovia in rather more peremptory terms. In his letter the consul states that if these reforms are carried out within six months, Great Britain will be disposed to help, but if not, will be inclined to demand immediate adjustment of all pending questions. By this letter advice becomes transformed into demand. To this peremptory demand, and the inconsiderate haste in the inauguration of reforms to which it led, the failure of the reform programme must be largely charged. The Liberian Government endeavored to the best of its ability to do what was expected of it and acquiesced entirely in the proposed programme. It appointed new officials in the customs service, passed a law creating a frontier force under European officials, and took steps to establish the chief inspector of customs, Mr. W. J. Lamont, as the financial adviser of the Republic.

Unfortunately the progress of the reform was not smooth and easy. There can be no doubt that considerable progress was made in the path of reform thus entered upon. That it failed of complete realization, and that in the early part of 1909 it came to a sudden stop, was due more than anything else to the bungling of British officials. The British consul-general displayed an utter lack of diplomatic qualifications for the difficult task of adviser to a foreign power which had been intrusted to him, and the British commander of the frontier force became embroiled in successive controversies with his Liberian employers which resulted in his discharge. One can not but regret that the reform movement so auspiciously begun should have suffered this check.

ECONOMIC NECESSITIES.

Liberia's great source of wealth is her forests, which yield her palm oil, palm kernels, piassava fiber, and rubber. These constitute the bulk of her exports. The gathering of these products is the work of natives, who sometimes labor under the direction of the Liberian, but more frequently barter the results of their independent toil with the Liberian or direct with the foreign merchant. Liberia fails to realize the full value of what she exports, because crude and wasteful

methods of gathering these products and preparing them for the export trade deprives them of a part of their value. More attention paid to these matters would undoubtedly enhance the value of the product.

The chief agricultural export of the Americo-Liberians is coffee. At one time the coffee industry was in a very flourishing condition, but is now stagnant or retrograde. The competition of other countries, notably of Brazil, which has brought to the world's market cheaper and better prepared coffees, has brought discouragement to the Liberian planter whose tiny crop no longer brings him those excellent prices which once rewarded his industry. He has grown listless and careless. He has not studied to adapt himself to the new conditions and continues to cultivate and harvest the old crop in the old way. The situation of coffee growing outside of Brazil is far from hopeless, but planters elsewhere must be content with smaller profits than before and must meet the Brazilian competition by placing their product on the market in the best possible shape. Crude and antiquated processes prevail in Liberia, and it has done little to meet these conditions.

Liberia has little more than scratched the surface of its soil in a very small portion of its area. While not an extensive country, it is very inaccessible for lack of proper means of communication. Rivers are navigable for a short distance from the coast only before rapids are reached; rough roads in the civilized settlements and forest trails and paths in the interior country are the only avenues of communication. Wheeled vehicles are almost unknown, and except for some water transport as the coast is neared, all the trade which flows from the interior comes upon the backs and heads of native carriers. This woeful absence of means of communication restricts greatly the area in which trade can originate, as well as minimizes the influence of Monrovia in the interior and presents great obstacles to the effective control of interior points. Mention has already been made of the situation in Kanre-Lahun in the northwestern section of Liberia. To reach this point through Liberian territory requires some twelve or fifteen days' march through the bush, and a longer time in the rainy season. It is significant that Liberian officials, who preceded the commission to this point, as did the commission itself, adopted the longer but speedier route by sea to Freetown, and thence by rail through Sierra Leone to a point only 15 miles distant from their destination.

The difficulties of communication in the interior do not result from the topographical configuration of the country, but rather from the absence of highways through the forest country. As a result, the interior of Liberia is as little known to the Liberians themselves as to the world at large. What its extensive forests may be able to produce, what stores of wealth lie hidden in them, what value the cleared land would have for agricultural purposes they simply do not know.

A still further difficulty in the way of Liberian commerce is the want of harbors and the consequent difficulties of shipping goods. When produce has with great labor been brought to the coast towns, there still remains the task of shipment. This, on account of the shallow water on the bars at the mouths of the rivers, is a costly and often dangerous task.

There is every reason to believe from the natural fertility of the soil and the luxuriance of its vegetation, that the country has great possibilities. But a more accurate knowledge must be had before they can be developed into fruitful sources of national wealth. There is, however, much reason to hope that were the natural resources of the country better known and more fully utilized, Liberia would be rid of much of the embarrassment which now perplexes her. With an increase in the economic activities would come an increase in national wealth, and the present painfully meager resources of the public treasury would be so increased that Liberia could easily meet the requirements of a modern and effective administration of its duties as a state which now press so hard upon her.

To the difficulties here enumerated must be added the lack of interest in industrial pursuits. The people are largely engaged in governmental and commercial pursuits. Trades and industries languish. Most of the skilled workers in Liberia are said to be from Sierra Leone. Nearly all manufactured articles are imported. While Liberia will never perhaps become a manufacturing country, greater attention will be necessary to the development of trades and industries before a high order of national thrift can be secured.

COLONIZATION.

In the present economic condition of Liberia just described, the commission is quite unable to recommend to the American negro any extensive emigration to that country. It believes that there is a field there for a large body of civilized negroes, but is equally certain that under existing conditions the emigrant who carries thither little beside his physical strength and his willingness to work out his own salvation would encounter little but hardship at the outset, and but a slim prospect of founding a comfortable economic existence for himself and his family. Liberia has much to do before it can offer tempting prospects to the would-be settler.

Its laws concerning immigration are fairly liberal and fairly intelligent. But its execution of the laws has fallen into disuse. One can imagine no greater embarrassment for the Liberian authorities than the unannounced arrival on their shores of a company of 200 or 300 immigrant laborers. If we can trust the statute books, land they have in abundance, but it is unsurveyed, it is inaccessible for lack of roads, and covered with a dense forest growth.

The Liberians know too little about their own country and understand too little how to develop its resources to be able to render any assistance to immigrants. A systematic study of the resources of the country; a knowledge of its products and the best methods of gathering them; a knowledge of the possibilities of its land and how it can best be brought under cultivation; the construction of at least one good road into the interior where better lands and more salubrious climate for man and beast are found—all these are necessary before Liberia can begin to offer inducements to immigrants. Liberia has neither the means nor the knowledge to enable her to prosecute such an effective study of her own country. No greater service could be rendered than to undertake for her such a study of her country as would enable Liberia to find herself economically, to enter into her own heritage, and to open hospitable doors to desirable immigrants from the United States.

PRESENT CONDITIONS DEMAND FOREIGN HELP.

To meet the problems which have been enumerated, Liberia is by her own confession powerless without the friendly aid and guidance of a more powerful nation strong where she is weak, in knowledge, in intelligence and resourcefulness. Apart from boundary questions, in which whatever skill in diplomatic negotiation Liberia might have has been overborne by the overwhelming force of her adversaries, compelling the acceptance of unfavorable adjustment, the problems discussed are in their essence problems of internal order and development. But through the weakness of Liberia and her inability to solve them by her own efforts, they have assumed an international aspect. The need of financial aid has thrown the administration of her customs into foreign hands, and the solicitude of her creditors lest their security be impaired has given new force to the demand for financial reorganization and proper methods in the conduct of her internal finances. As Liberians lack the technical financial experience to accomplish this purpose they must call foreigners to their assistance. The need of controlling more effectively the natives on her frontiers and elsewhere gives rise to the need of an effective constabulary, and as the Liberian again lacks the technical military skill to organize such a force she must appeal to the foreigner. She has asked, moreover, the assistance of other countries in developing her agriculture and her schools, and has expressed a wish for experts in the postal and other branches of administration to put her whole government service upon a satisfactory basis.

Liberia is in more or less intimate relations with four great powers—Great Britain, France, the German Empire, and the United States—to all of whom she has turned in times past for sympathy and support, and none of whom have been wholly deaf to her appeal. With Great Britain her relations have been more intimate than with the others. This nation has repeatedly expressed her friendly interest in the welfare of Liberia, and has given unmistakable evidences of it. She alone has thus far proffered the aid of her citizens in helping the Liberians to solve some of the internal problems. But however excellent may have been Great Britain's intentions, however commendable the not inconsiderable beginnings of reform made under the guidance of British officials, the experiment has turned out disastrously. Precipitated, perhaps, by the unfortunate personalities of those entrusted with the work in Liberia, a crisis occurred in Liberian affairs last spring, which brought a considerable part of the work undertaken to a dramatic conclusion.

Those untoward events left behind them a spirit of great bitterness, which is thoroughly explicable, whether well founded or otherwise. Under present conditions it is difficult to find among the Liberians any who have entire confidence in the disinterestedness of Great Britain. Those who led the reform movement and supported the British officials as long as it was possible to do so are now in a distinctly apologetic attitude, while the masses of the people, never enamored of the ascendancy of British interests in Liberian affairs, are openly distrustful of everything British. The events of recent days are magnified and are taken as evidences of sinister design, while the half-forgotten wrongs of the past are revived in evidence that Great Britain never was nor could be thoroughly friendly.

The interests of Great Britain have too often run counter to those of Liberia for this attitude of the public mind to be wholly groundless. Aggressions upon Liberian territory, only less frequent than those of France, incline to the belief that Great Britain would be only too willing to absorb the country. It is natural that Liberians should look askance at measures which tended to place in the hands of British officials the entire finances of the country and its only effective military force. It is only too natural that they should face the probability that the interests of those persons as Liberian officials and as British subjects should come into conflict, with results disastrous for Liberia.

But even if the Liberians were blind to this situation, the French were there to open their eyes. Even if Liberia saw in it no element of danger, the French were suspicious and made emphatic protest against handing over the governmental interests of the Republic to British officials. In recent years the attitude of France toward Liberia has hardly been disguised under forms of friendship. She has shown herself disposed to push her boundaries remorselessly into Liberian territory, and has used every available pretext to that end. Her interest in Liberia is apparently that of an heir expectant. She has made no offer to help Liberia, and her demand for a share in the internal administration of the country was not dictated by any zeal for the welfare of Liberia, but simply and only to safeguard her own eventual interests. If Liberia is to be dismembered, France wants a share of it. In view of this situation the Liberians fully realize that to invite at this juncture the aid of France in the accomplishment of the reforms which have been postponed, but not abandoned, would be to leap from the frying pan into the fire.

With Germany the relations of Liberia have in recent years not been marred by any of those conflicts which ruffle the waters of international friendship. In Liberia's differences with her neighbors, Germany has lent her at least a sympathetic understanding. For the time being at least, Germany seems to have renounced any idea she may once have had of gaining a foothold in Liberian territory and appears content to foster as much as may be the development of her commercial interests. Yet the evidences of her growing influence are obvious, though as yet her Government is not committed to any definite policy. It is generally believed in Liberia that Germany has been biding her time till she could undertake with good grace an intervention in Liberian affairs. There is less suspicion among Liberians - that Germany might be disposed to serve her own ends than in the case of Great Britain and France. But if Germany has no immediate territorial interest in Liberia, it has ambitious designs in Africa. It is a colonial power whose actions are jealously watched by other nations and she could not assume a prominent rôle in Liberian affairs without awakening the suspicion of Great Britain and France.

Liberia is thus confronted by the fact that she can not, without serious danger, call to her aid either Great Britain, France, or Germany. Two of these powers she deeply distrusts, and each of them distrusts the other two. None of them could guide and direct the needed reforms in Liberian administration without great friction, threatening the outcome of the proposed action, and leaving Liberia in a more precarious situation than before. The logic of the situa-

tion in the minds of the Liberians points therefore to the United States as the only country which can give them effective aid. Of all Liberia's friends she alone is open to no suspicion of ulterior designs upon Liberia, and she alone can give assurances to Great Britain and France and Germany that the legitimate interests of those countries in Liberia, whatever they may be, will not be placed in jeopardy by her actions.

LIBERIA LOOKS TO THE UNITED STATES.

It is readily comprehensible why, under the present conditions, Liberia looks to the United States for the solution of her present pressing difficulties. This feeling is widespread and pervades all classes of the community. Indeed among certain classes of the community the impression seems to prevail that all that is needed for the immediate salvation of Liberia is for the United States to take a hand in her affairs, and that should it do so all the strength, the vigor, the civilization and progress which characterize our country would in some mysterious manner be infused into Liberia. The commission has no desire to disguise the fact that the great majority of the people of Liberia expect much of the people of the United States; in fact, they expect too much. It found it necessary in its public utterances to discourage the belief that if the United States were to intervene, all of Liberia's troubles would speedily come to an end. The commission had to point out that the best which the United States could offer to the Liberians was guidance; that the work of redeeming the country must be the labor of the Liberians themselves. Moreover, it was pointed out that the sphere within which a foreign nation could be of practical assistance to them was comparatively limited and that there were many things needful for the regeneration of their country which they must of necessity do themselves. It is not our province to enumerate these things specifically, but we could not fail to be impressed by the fact that few of the civilized Liberians were actively and energetically engaged in productive industry; that the professions and public employment seem to be the only goal of ambition; and the feeling could not at times be repressed that the Liberians were willing to receive their salvation but unwilling to work it out.

On the other hand, it should be most distinctly stated that the official classes in Liberia do not share these exaggerated views. They impressed the commission as being reasonable in their views as to what the United States might offer them. Looking at the matter from the standpoint of Liberia, they were naturally prone to hope that the intervention of the United States in their affairs might be not only effective but far reaching. It was not to be expected that they should view the situation from the standpoint of the United States, or weigh carefully whether the action requested, however beneficial it might be to Liberia, was consistent with the policy of the United States, or was likely to receive the unqualified approval of the citizens of her country.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia a formal statement of suggestions was made to the commission. It is a dignified and moderate document, far removed from the visionary and fantastic expectations encountered in some unofficial circles.

These suggestions are:

1. That the Government of the United States be requested to guarantee as far as practicable the independence and integrity of Liberia, either alone or in conjunction with certain European powers.

2. To advise and counsel the Government of Liberia on international affairs and with respect to reforms.

3. The Government of the United States be requested to liquidate the foreign and local indebtedness of the Republic, taking over the control of its financial and customs administrations for a period of years sufficient to effect a reorganization and systemization of same under American experts and allowing to the Republic an annual sum to be hereinafter agreed upon for the payment of the expenses of the Government and for internal improvements until the amount advanced by the United States for the liquidation of the indebtedness of the Republic be paid.

4. That the United States Government be requested to furnish the Republic with experts for service in such departments of government as may be deemed necessary—at the expense of the latter—in order to facilitate and carry out the necessary reforms.

5. That the Government of the United States be requested to use its good offices in inducing American capitalists—either in conjunction with foreign capitalists or alone—to establish a bank in Liberia which shall receive the revenues of the Republic and make advances to the Government upon terms to be agreed upon, and also to construct and run railways and other improvements.

6. That the Government of the United States be requested to enter into an arbitration treaty with Liberia, and to use its good and kind offices with the European powers interested in West Africa to enter into similar engagements with the Republic.

7. That the American Government be requested to use their good offices to secure the equitable execution of the boundary arrangements entered into between the Government of Liberia and the Governments of Great Britain and France, especially to assist the Government of Liberia diplomatically to secure possession of the Kanre Lahun section and other sections in the north of Liberia, now occupied by Great Britain, which by the Anglo-Liberian boundary commission were acknowledged to this Republic, as well as the securing to Liberia the hinterland recognized as Liberian by the conventions concluded between her and France, but which has been materially altered to the detriment of Liberia by the delimitation commission of 1908-9.

8. That the Government of the United States be requested to undertake a scientific research of the country with the view of ascertaining a more accurate knowledge of its mineral, vegetable, and other resources, and to interest American capitalists in the development of the same; and also to aid the Government of Liberia in the establishment of a school for scientific medical research with particular reference to the study of tropical diseases.

9. To aid the Government of Liberia in establishing industrial schools in one or more of the counties of the Republic with a view of promoting a knowledge of such trades and industries as will render the Republic self-reliant.

10. To aid in establishing civilized centers on the frontiers and hinterland in order to accelerate the uplifting and improvement of the natives and perpetuate the object of the American founders of Liberia.

11. To supervise the organization of a police and frontier force under American officers.

12. To request the United States war ships to visit Liberia annually, or oftener.

13. It is the anxious desire of Liberia that closer business relations and a substantial sail or steam service be established between the mother country and ours, and to this end we earnestly ask that the United States will encourage and foster a regular line of steamers (by an American company) to carry mails and passengers to and from Liberia as well as African produce to the American markets.

14. The Government of Liberia here express its willingness to concede to the Government of the United States any rights and privileges for the construction of coaling stations or any other enterprises which she may deem necessary to enter upon that would be beneficial to the people and Government of the United States, the same not being inconsistent with existing treaty stipulations with other foreign powers.

Whether or not the Liberian requests can be granted in their entirety, there is in the traditional attitude of the United States and in the past history of her dealings with Liberia much to encourage the Liberians in the belief that their hopes may be realized. The commission is firmly convinced that they have a rightful claim upon our aid and assistance. It is, moreover, not less firm in its belief that considerations of national honor and duty urge that the United States help these people whose Commonwealth was founded by the people of the United States with the aid and assistance of its Government.

More than once the United States has intervened in behalf of the people of Liberia. Our Government has repeatedly expressed to European powers its keen interest in the welfare of that country and has striven to its utmost to secure justice and equity in the dealings of foreign powers with the Republic. The duty of our Government toward this people has been expressed in numbers of state papers, but nowhere perhaps more adequately and forcefully than in the letter of Secretary Root to the President, under date of January 18, 1909, when he said:

It is unnecessary to argue that the duty of the United States toward the unfortunate victims of the slave trade was not completely performed by landing them upon the coast of Africa and that our nation rests under the highest obligations to assist them, so far as they need assistance, toward the maintenance of free, orderly, and prosperous civil society.

A review of the history of the relations of the United States with Liberia brings the commission to the conclusion that, beyond a series of notable expressions of good will and friendship, its positive results have been painfully meager. Heretofore the aid of the United States has been sought by Liberia and proffered to Liberia almost wholly to ward off dangers from without. Had they been more successful, they would at the best have preserved to Liberia a larger sphere of action without conferring on her any of the strength necessary to maintain and develop it. For the first time in our history an opportunity is now offered to the United States to embody in positive action its traditional interest in the affairs of the Republic and thus fulfill a duty incumbent upon the United States from the circumstances under which that Commonwealth had its origin. The situation in Liberia, calling as it has imperatively for the aid of a foreign power, no other power but the United States being in a position to offer such aid, the duty of the United States toward Liberia being expressly recognized by our Government and our commission having been appointed "with a view to reporting recommendations as to the specific action on the part of the Government of the United States which will constitute the most effective measures of relief," we have the honor to present herewith the following unanimous recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. That the United States extend its aid to Liberia in the prompt settlement of pending boundary disputes.

The Government of Liberia has, through its envoys to the United States, requested that our Government enter into a treaty which shall guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic.

By so doing the United States would be forced to assume a protectorate over Liberia, which that Government has already been advised is out of the question. None the less it is perfectly clear that in the present situation the unsettled boundaries of the country are an obstacle to its internal development. A prompt settlement of these disputes on a definite basis, which, if possible, should be more considerate of the legitimate claims of Liberia than have been such adjustments in times past, would remove one of the greatest hindrances to progress in Liberia. These former settlements have been ineffective to accomplish, because they have been vague and indefinite. Each treaty which has thus far been consummated has contained the germs of new difficulties. The time has come when such vague and indefinite treaties can no longer be tolerated. The territories through which boundaries run are no longer unexplored, but are becoming daily better known. African geography is being reduced from imagination to fact. The border territories are being traversed and occupied by powerful nations. Under these conditions it is not only possible but it is imperative that the boundary lines should be definite and unmistakable; that they should not only be fixed by treaty, but that they should be definitely surveyed. If this is accomplished the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Liberia will not present the same difficulties as it does to-day. It is not by a treaty guaranteeing to Liberia its territorial integrity with limits most difficult to define that the United States can best protect that Republic from the encroachments of her neighbors. It is rather by lending its influence that these boundaries may be fixed definitely once and for all that it can accomplish the end desired by Liberia.

Alone Liberia is helpless to achieve this purpose. Her negotiations in the past have been handled with some skill, but she has at every turn been forced to yield. The United States should come to her aid more effectively than in the past. It is believed that a form of action can be found which is consistent with diplomatic usage which will enable the United States to appear as attorney or next friend of Liberia and bring to the negotiation of her difficulties the ability and prestige of the United States.

So far as the adjustment of her difficulties with foreign countries has been delayed and a vigorous reclamation of her rights has been impeded by the fear that such settlements would involve monetary payments, which Liberia fears she is unable to make, the difficulties should be met by a guarantee of the United States of the prompt fulfillment of such eventual monetary obligations. Liberia should by treaty provide to secure the United States the repayment of any sums which it might become necessary for her Government to disburse under this guarantee. Such repayment could be readily arranged if the recommendations of the commission be accepted in their entirety.

2. That the United States enable Liberia to refund its debt by assuming as a guarantee for the payment of obligations under such arrangement the control and collection of the Liberian customs.

The debt of Liberia is partly foreign and partly domestic. A portion of the former is now guaranteed by the control of customs under British officials. It is proposed that the entire debt of Liberia, both foreign and domestic, should be reorganized; that the obligations of Liberia should be clear, explicit, and uniform; and that in order to effect this a customs receivership analogous to that now ex-

isting in Santo Domingo should be established. By the refunding of the debt, the Liberian treasury would be relieved of certain heavy payments which it is now under obligations to make. An annual payment for the debt service, no greater than that provided in the present budget, would serve to pay off all existing charges to abolish the floating debt and make definite provision for its payment. At no greater cost than it is now incurring, the Liberian Government could by such arrangement obtain a far more satisfactory service. Such a comprehensive measure would far more than the present arrangement justify the Government in placing the collection of its customs, as it has already done, in the hands of foreign officials. It would, moreover, eliminate the present arrangement and do away with British officials who, though efficient in the discharge of their duties, are at the present time distasteful to the Liberian people.

The United States should only enter into such an arrangement in case it can confer notable advantages upon the Republic of Liberia by lightening the burden of its debt. Apart from the debt of 1906 Liberian securities and other evidences of debt are considerably below par and difficult to negotiate. If the arrangement proposed offers ready negotiability as well as prompt and certain payment of interest and other debt charges, it renders a valuable service to the holders of the debt for which they should be willing to pay. There can be little doubt that to secure the advantages referred to the holders would be glad to consent to appropriate reductions in the principal of the debt.

It is proposed that all payments of interest and other charges should be made directly from the customs receipts by the receiver of customs. It is further proposed that the cash proceeds of the loan so far as they may be available for purposes other than adjusting existing debts shall be disbursed only for purposes of strengthening the public credit or for public works with the approval of the receiver of customs.

The commission has carefully studied the banking aspects of this proposition. It has been assured that if the United States will adopt measures similar to those which adjusted the Dominican debt there can be no doubt that the Liberian loan could be readily financed on terms favorable to Liberia.

3. That the United States lend its assistance to the Liberian Government in the reform of its internal finances.

If the United States assumes control of the collection of customs in Liberia it should appoint as customs receiver a person capable of exercising the functions of financial adviser to the Liberian Government, and the duties of such an adviser should be fixed by agreement with the Government of Liberia. It is not proposed to invest this official with any administrative duties as concerns the general financial transactions of the Republic. With the recognized need of reform in the Liberian treasury an official of this character, who would exercise his functions wisely and discreetly, could be of the utmost assistance. In the judgment of the commission the reform in treasury methods can not be accomplished by a reorganization *de novo*, but must proceed gradually, establishing from time to time certain definite principles of correct administration and gradually developing details as these fundamental principles are incorporated

into the financial practice of the Liberian Republic. The practical training of Liberians in the work of national finance should be the constant aim of the financial adviser, with a view to enabling them ultimately to take complete charge of their own affairs.

It would add to the force of such an arrangement if from time to time the condition and methods of the Liberian treasury should be subject to the inspection and report of auditors appointed by the Government of the United States.

4. That the United States should lend its aid to Liberia in organizing the drilling an adequate constabulary or frontier police force.

The proposal is that not less than three officers from the American Army should be sent to Liberia to complete the work begun by British officers, and train up a body of Liberians capable of eventually taking over the command of the force. It should be an essential condition of such an arrangement that the present law placing the command of the force in the hands of a Liberian should be regarded as temporary only and be repealed, such repeal taking effect upon the assumption of command by the American officer chosen for this duty by the War Department.

It is highly desirable that the chief of this force should be a commissioned officer having in the American Army a rank not below that of captain, who should in the Liberian service have the rank of major and the emoluments corresponding to that rank in the service of the United States. His associates might be chosen from the more experienced first lieutenants, and should receive in Liberia the rank and pay of captains. It is of course understood that the acceptance of such service abroad would not cause these officers to lose their place in the United States Army. Under the agreements with Great Britain the whole cost of the salaries of the foreign officers was borne by the Government of Liberia. This was for Liberia a large charge which, with the superior pay scale of the American Army, would be still heavier were a like arrangement made.

It is therefore recommended that these officers be detailed from the army of the United States and continue to draw the compensation of their rank from the United States, and that Liberia agree to pay the difference between the salary of the actual rank and that given them in the Liberian service. It appears to the members of the commission that if no legal obstacle interposes there is ample justification for such a course. The experience gained by such officers would increase their efficiency in their future service in the army of the United States. The practice of governments in detailing officers to foreign embassies and to observe the maneuvers and wars of foreign countries offers many analogies.

If, however, legal obstacles prevent the course above outlined, the commission has an alternative suggestion. It is that officers of unusual experience and ability be selected from the highest ranks of the noncommissioned officers, and that Liberia pay them the salaries current in the United States for first lieutenants and second lieutenants. If the proper men were selected, this course would, it is believed, be almost as effective for all practical purposes in Liberia as the first plan. It is quite true that such officers would not carry with them the prestige of commissioned officers. It is possibly true that the resulting organization in Liberia would be less accomplished as a military unit, but equally effective as a police force.

The experience of Porto Rico, where an effective police battalion was under command of former noncommissioned officers of the army, proves that such a proposition is practical and not visionary. What is wanted among these men is drill and military discipline. They act in small squads and not as a mass. In such action it is the bearing and discretion of the petty officers and the enlisted men, rather than the military skill of the absent captain, which gives the issue. The need of a high degree of military training in the command of such a force seems to the commission greatly exaggerated, and founded more upon the example of other nations than upon the necessities of the case. We believe that a force commanded by men of the highest military training would be more respected by Liberian neighbors, but that a force commanded by men of more modest attainments would serve the immediate purposes of Liberia equally well.

The commission believes that whichever plan be adopted the men chosen for this service should be taken, if possible, from our negro regiments. The service would be peculiarly attractive to such men and offer them, perhaps, opportunities for more rapid advancement in their profession than could be hoped for at home. They would, it is believed, bring to the service a peculiar interest and zeal, which would go far toward making their service effective.

The various recommendations of the commission, if carried out, would require the negotiation of a treaty or treaties with Liberia. Inasmuch as irregularity of pay is one of the frequent and well-founded complaints in the Liberian service, provision should be made that all American citizens who enter the Liberian service by virtue of agreements made with our Government should receive promptly all sums due them for such services by the Liberian Government. This can best be effected by making such payments a charge against the customs duties, and payable by the customs receiver directly from his receipts before turning them over to the Liberian treasury.

5. That the United States should establish and maintain a research station in Liberia.

The object of such station should be the scientific research of the natural phenomena of the country, the development and preservation of its sources of wealth, the effect of climate on health, and the causes, treatment, and cure of tropical diseases. In this the commission believes that the underlying purpose of the recent request of the Liberian Government to send to that country an expert from its Department of Agriculture could best be carried out. The problem before the Liberians is a large one. Their country is little known either to the world or to themselves. A knowledge of its natural phenomena would be the most effective service which could be rendered to it in aid of its internal development. It would bring to the attention of the people the importance in agriculture which would stimulate present production and would undoubtedly discover new forms of agriculture to which the country was well adapted. It would, moreover, by its researches in the field of hygiene and sanitation, enable them better to resist the ravages of the climate and, by improving the general health of the community, add to its wealth. It would by its researches do much to open up the great hinterland and would point the way to productive enterprise in the means of communication. No other service which could be rendered the Libe-

rians at the present time would be more fundamental and give greater assurance of future prosperity to the country.

Such a station would, moreover, have obvious advantages to the people of the United States. Through our possessions in the Philippine Islands, in Porto Rico, and the Canal Zone, we are called upon to contribute our share to the national developments of life in the Tropics. The problems of agriculture and of sanitation are especially urgent. These problems can be solved only on the basis of experiment and comparative observation. We can learn what to do and what to favor in our own tropical possessions, not only by a study of their own conditions, but also by a study of those prevailing in other tropical regions. For such comparative purpose they are at the present time wholly dependent upon the researches of other nations. There is little doubt that apart from its contributions to the world's knowledge, the results of such research in tropical Africa would inure directly to the benefit of the United States in dealing with the problems of its own tropical possessions.

The United States has already in its brief career in the Tropics made researches and discoveries which have enriched the world's knowledge of tropical conditions. It is to be anticipated that were a well-equipped station established in Liberia, there would be further fruits of research which would redound to the credit of the United States. It would afford to the American student an opportunity for study of the natural products of the continent of Africa in one of its least explored and probably richest parts.

Nor is it to be overlooked that such a station would in a few years acquire a vast store of information for the instruction and direction of immigrants from the United States. Under favorable conditions Liberia can offer great advantages to our negro fellow-citizens. Until, however, the necessary information regarding the country can be placed before would-be immigrants in some systematic and effective way, attempts on the part of American immigrants to make a home in Africa must be attended with great probability of disaster.

The organization of such a bureau would involve the concurrent action of several of the departments of government, to which may well be left the arrangement of such details as the selection of a suitable scientific staff and provision for an adequate equipment for their work.

6. That the United States reopen the question of establishing a naval coaling station in Liberia.

The Liberian Government has at different times requested the United States to establish a coaling station within the boundaries of that country and has agreed to cede to the Government of the United States the land necessary for that purpose. Investigations made by the Navy Department show that the only available point is immediately adjacent to Monrovia, the capital of the country. To such a location the Liberians have no objections and are quite willing to cede the necessary land for the purpose. Such a naval station would involve rather expensive harbor works and estimates of the cost of such works have been prepared by the engineer officers of the navy.

With the growing importance of the navy of the United States and with the increasing share of her country in world movements, it would appear to the members of the commission that this question

might well receive further study. The reports submitted to the Navy Department are not altogether unfavorable to the project and some representatives of that department are most strongly inclined toward it. The commission does not feel qualified to pass judgment upon the technical aspects of the case. It can only point out the service which such a station would lend to the prestige of the United States in Liberia, and the advantages which would accrue to that country from the expenditure for that purpose and from the encouragement and support which would follow the more frequent visits of our naval officials to its shores. The benefits which such a station would confer upon Liberia are obvious. It would give her at the capital city a safe and commodious harbor. The dangers attendant upon navigation and the shipping and landing of goods would be removed. With this great obstacle to commerce removed greater inducements would present themselves for the construction of railroads to the interior and the bringing of Liberian wealth into the commerce of the world.

It has not been deemed wise to incorporate in these recommendations all of the details which would be necessary to a complete realization of the plans proposed. These must be largely the result of further study and of diplomatic negotiations. The commission has felt that the minutiae of such plans was beyond its strict province, and that in submitting in general terms the principles upon which it believes the United States should take specific action in aid of Liberia it has fulfilled the trust committed to it.

Respectfully submitted.

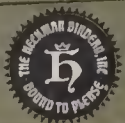
ROLAND P. FALKNER,
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GEO. A. FINCH,
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The SECRETARY OF STATE.







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